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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

ONEILL, MICHAEL W

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3713

DATE MAILED: 03/10/2004

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/982,437

Applicant(s)

BRANDSTETTER ET AL.

Examiner

Michael O'Neill

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 January 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 9, 10, 12-14 and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Seelig et al. 6,656,043.

Seelig et al. '043 discloses an interactive sign that is played by a player after a bonus triggering event. In this case the interactive sign is either a tangible ball hopper or a video ball hopper. As shown in fig 1C, the interactive sign can be linked to a plurality of game machines. As described in the disclosure plays active the interactive sign with one of plurality of bonus triggering events, e.g. triple "7"s or a royal flush or the like.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 3, 4, 8, 11, 15, 17 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Seelig et al. '043 and Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA).

Re. Claims 3, 4, 8, 17 and 20: absent a showing of criticality, the manner the bonus event is trigger is a design choice left to the inventor's discretion.

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Re. Claim 11: what machine a player decides to play is at the discretion of the player and is just deemed intended usage of the claimed invention.

Re. Claim 15: Applicants admits of the existence of the Wheel of Fortune style of bonus games. The choice of theme of the bonus game is a matter of design choice because all are considered by artisans as art recognized equivalent bonus rounds absent a particular development of a bonus round.

Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Seelig et al. '043 in view of Seelig et al. USPN 6,537,152.

Viewing figure 5C, it is taught in Seelig et al. '152 to have a human interface as part of the bonus event. One skilled in the art would find it obvious absent a showing of criticality to have a human interface as part of the interactive bonus event as claimed and described within the instant specification. It should be noted that positive recitations of human beings is deemed unpatentable by then Assistant Secretary and Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Donald J. Quigg, who issued a notice in the Official Gazette stating, "A claim directed to or including within its scope a human being will not be considered to be patentable subject matter under 35 U.S.C. 101. The grant of a limited, but exclusive property right in a human being is

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prohibited by the Constitution." 1077 OG 24 (1987), reprinted in 1146 TMOG 24 (1993).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 1-20-04 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The Examiner has reviewed the instant specification to see if there is patentable material presented. The sparse disclosure doesn't provide much in the way of patentable subject matter. A vast majority of the instant specification discusses the prior art. Only two and half pages are devoted to a detailed description. And, within this detailed description everything disclosed is recited in generalities which as shown by the plethora of prior art is deemed obvious. The instant application has no focus on an invention. It appears nothing more than a general application of well known and off the shelf pieces of prior art connected together that the Applicant has not himself seen before. However, the criteria of non-obviousness is not dependent on the vision of the Applicant. It is the gathering of the prior art and what one deemed with the knowledge of the prior art and their own engineering capabilities be able to construct. In this case, the general idea of having an interactive bonus game played on a large video

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monitor for all to see would be obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was contemplated.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael

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O'Neill whose telephone number is 703-308-3484. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 5 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Teresa J. Walberg can be reached on 703-308-1327. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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MICHAEL O'NEILL
PRIMARY EXAMINER